



TPC Architects, Inc.

8680 Greenback Lane, Suite 107
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TPC Architects, Inc.

Newsletter

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Nonresidential Construction to Grow in 2011

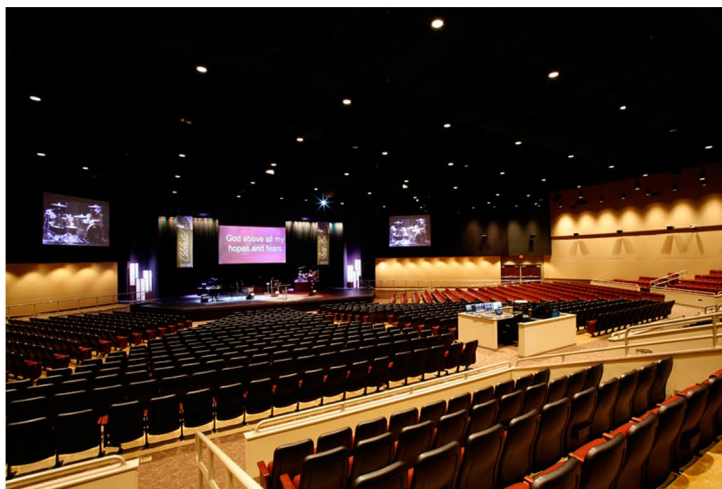
A recent AIA forecast predicts that by the middle of 2011, nonresidential construction should grow by 3.1 percent, reports RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT.

Scripture for the Month

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array. (1 Chron 16:29 NASB)

Worship the LORD with reverence

DEDICATED WORSHIP SPACE



Rolling Hills Christian Church, El Dorado Hills, CA
Dedicated Worship Environment

Last month we discussed the concept of multi-use space for churches. For a review you may wish to access TPC's July 2010 newsletter via the "Past Issues" link to the left. With the growing trend toward community oriented "event center" style worship space, why would a church want to design a building space dedicated predominantly to the worship assembly environment? This month's newsletter offers some thoughts. Let's start with a list of criteria that affect your worship environment.

- Sense of gathering and corporate worship.
- Stage or platform functions.
- Acoustical environment.
- Sight lines.
- Worship aesthetics, including room proportions.
- Participants' physical comfort.
- Circulation, accessibility to stage.
- Technical systems (audio, visual imaging, lighting, staging).
- Baptismal functions and other special worship activities.

Now, think of the impact on these criteria when you introduce flat floors, moveable seating, sports courts, and food. Although it is certainly possible to maximize some of these multi-use criteria within a worship environment through good design, the inherent

And rejoice with
trembling. (Psalms 2:11
NASB)

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give-and-take involved will inevitably subtract from the worship environment in some way.

If your church's *Ministry Master Plan* (see Oct. 2009 Newsletter) includes a secondary assembly space with a flat floor, such as a Fellowship Hall or Youth Center (or community room), you may decide to use this multi-use assembly space as your Phase 1 worship space and master plan a subsequent dedicated worship space. This approach can provide you with the best of both gathering space concepts.

DOES "DEDICATED" MEAN "INFLEXIBLE"?

Absolutely not! You of course must decide on the non-negotiable design elements (sight lines, acoustics, etc.), but it is our experience that well-designed worship environments can host a variety of non-worship activities, such as concerts, community gatherings, special celebrations, and essentially any assembly activity where a comfortable, focused environment is beneficial. When you design your space you can work with your architect to explore the impact of each anticipated activity on the worship environment. We encourage you to be flexible in your thinking but exacting in your expectations.



Rolling Hills Christian Church

WHAT ABOUT THE COST?

Whether your worship occurs within a multi-use environment or a dedicated worship environment you will need to address the same basic criteria. Take acoustics, for instance. In a multi-use environment you will likely have straight, parallel walls that will require acoustical treatment to counteract the unwelcome reflections. You may also need to spend additional dollars on your audio reinforcement system to accomplish a good distribution of the required range of frequencies throughout the room. The combination of these acoustical design solutions should be compared with the cost of an acoustically sensitive architectural design. You may be surprised at the small difference. You can apply this thinking to staging, specialty lighting, visual imaging, and other worship-sensitive design elements as well.

Other cost factors for the worship environment are likely more subjective. Architectural style, volumes, and detail can make a big difference. Floor coverings, ceiling treatments, and the overall caliber of materials may increase the cost. But these are personal decisions. At TPC Architects we promote simplicity in the worship space, often using a

"black sky" such as with Rolling Hills Christian Church (see photo), and applying basic building materials in creative ways. We believe the focus should be on the stage, with Christ in the center, rather than on "magnificent architecture". Good worship space design does not need to exorbitantly expensive.

PERSPECTIVE

Whatever approaches you choose in the design of your worship space remember that your building is not the church, nor is it ministry. It is a building! It is a tool to be used by God while doing ministry! The disciples needed some clarification on this point as they were leaving the temple one day.

"As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!' And Jesus said to him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.'" (Mark 13:1-2)

It is possible to get caught up in designing your new worship facility and lose sight of the church! Building a church facility takes more time, energy and money than anything else you're likely to do at your church, and it is only a building. Never lose sight of this.

Summary

Your worship space is important to God. He instructs us to gather there to worship Him. It is a sacred space in His eyes. Although the architecture style or approach is certainly not a prerequisite for His presence, He does delight in our reverence, and worshipping Him in "holy array". We encourage you to evaluate this aspect of the worship environment as you plan your facilities.



Next Month: Staging Systems

I encourage you to contact me personally with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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